

Be Mindful Young Jedi and Seniors Too !

I have used this expression many times with Civil Air Patrol Cadets in a variety of situations. The phrase has been directed at the strategy of dealing with the unlikely- but-possible to the immediately probable.

Senior and Cadet Members of CAP should adopt the practice of performing mental reality checks, especially when in small groups, pairs, or especially alone. Leaders are often occupied with accomplishing "The Plan". This preoccupation of following a syllabus is similar in some respects to using a cell phone while driving.

To be "mindful" is to be aware. Cadets performing Marshalling Support Services at an air show obviously know not to walk into an invisible but spinning propeller, don't they? Hats are removed on the tarmac because the automatic response when wind blows could lead to disaster. Everyone walks facing oncoming traffic, right?

While surveying in Florida, I once was working to solve a problem in the heat and humidity, late in the afternoon, while in a stationary but rocking boat on the Indian River just North of Cape Canaveral. I splashed water on my face and the reaction brought my mind-on-cruise to focus. An Alligator had floated over while boat's engines were silent. He blinked, I jumped, and I think he said, "Next time".

Did I know there were Alligators in the River? Yes. Was I irrationally afraid of them or not aware of what they do as a routine matter of survival? No. Did I know that this particular fellow was right beside my boat on that day and hour?

Cayman or South American alligators are fed chicken, beef, pork, lamb and fish in a confined feeding facility near geothermal springs at Hagerman, Idaho. Idaho has other critters without scales that fit into the PREDATOR CATEGORY. Our Search and Rescue EXercises and actual missions take many of us into unfamiliar territory where our fine people fit into the PREY CATEGORY. We know about snakes, but probably don't proactively think about our cadets or ourselves as LUNCH.

Wolves, Mountain Lions, Bears, Coyotes and Ferrell Dogs DO LUNCH. Smaller Critters with fangs and attitude can do damage especially when cornered. Think of the ramifications of actually DOING LUNCH!

Please don't take this message as a reason not to participate in reasonable field activities. Enjoying the Environment is rare enough. Avoid known dangerous habitat, sojourn in numbers and never bait an attacker or predator. RUN from two legged attackers, avoid eye contact; if you must fight, ignore fairness, choreograph it and win. DON'T RUN from four legged predators; face them, make noise, and run as a last resort. Reduce panic reflex by thought and reasonable discrete discussion.

----- BE MINDFUL YOUNG JEDI's !! -----

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